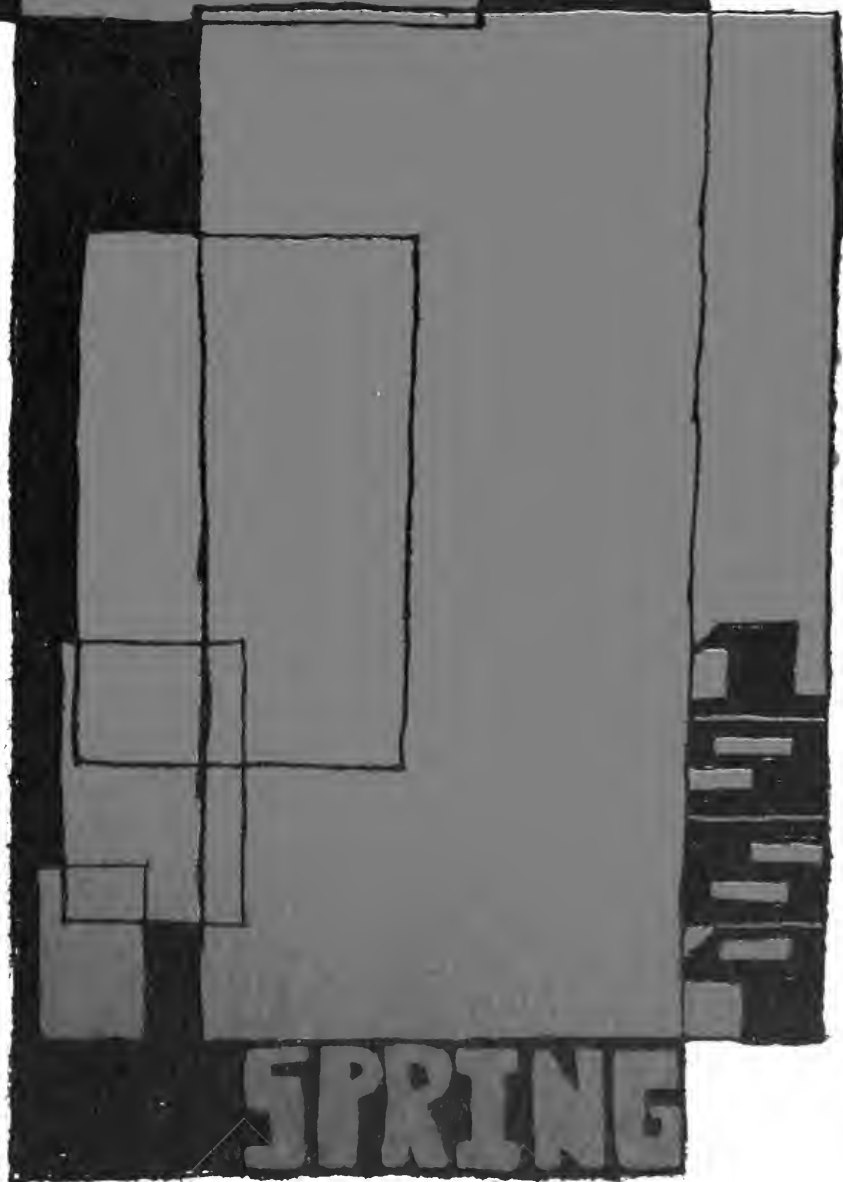


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COLONNADE

LONGWOOD COLLEGE
FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA
SPRING • 1964-65



VOLUME XXVIII NO. 3

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Projected Aims for *The Colonnade*

As the incumbent Co-Editors of *The Colonnade*, we would like to express the general aims which will be primary considerations for the creation of the 1965-66 issues of the literary magazine.

The first general aim is to promote more student interest in *The Colonnade*. The magazine must have contributors, and it must have readers—every student can participate in *their* literary publication in one or both ways. As student participation and interest are essential factors in the success of *The Colonnade*, we are planning a more comprehensive program of publicity.

The next general aim is to improve the magazine with regard to development of a fine arts format and visual effects in layout. The fine arts format will produce a magazine in which the art work will not have to be illustrative of the written entries in *The Colonnade*, rather the art will be a creative entity with as much aesthetic value as the written creation. In turn, the fine arts format will be dependent upon the visual effect of the lay-out or the physical structure of the magazine. General lay-out considerations involve color, paper stock, printing techniques, and arrangement of the material.

Yet another general aim is to widen the editorial outlook of *The Colonnade*. A variety of topics will be discussed in the editorials, examples being the investigation of new writers and personalities of public interest and of interest on the Longwood campus.

We, the Co-Editors, invite you to challenge or to question our aims, considering that we represent the organizers for *your* literary magazine, *The Colonnade*.

S.K.C.

D.L.W.

Notes on the Spring Literary Contest

The Colonnade staff would like to express its gratitude for the efforts of our judges in making this contest possible. To Mr. Herbert R. Blackwell, Mr. and Mrs. David W. Wiley, and student judge, Miss Barbara Garrison, we voice our thanks for their generous donation of their time and talents.

The staff also wishes to convey its congratulations to the winners of the short story, poetry, and prose impression divisions in the 1965 Spring Literary Contest, and hopes these winners will continue in their creative efforts. To all entrants, we say again thank you for making such a productive contest possible. To you, we express our hope that you will continue to submit material to *The Colonnade* for consideration in future issues, and furthermore we invite you and any other interested students to participate in any of our staffs; for we represent and publish your literary magazine.

Colonnade Sketches: Conversation with a Young Poet

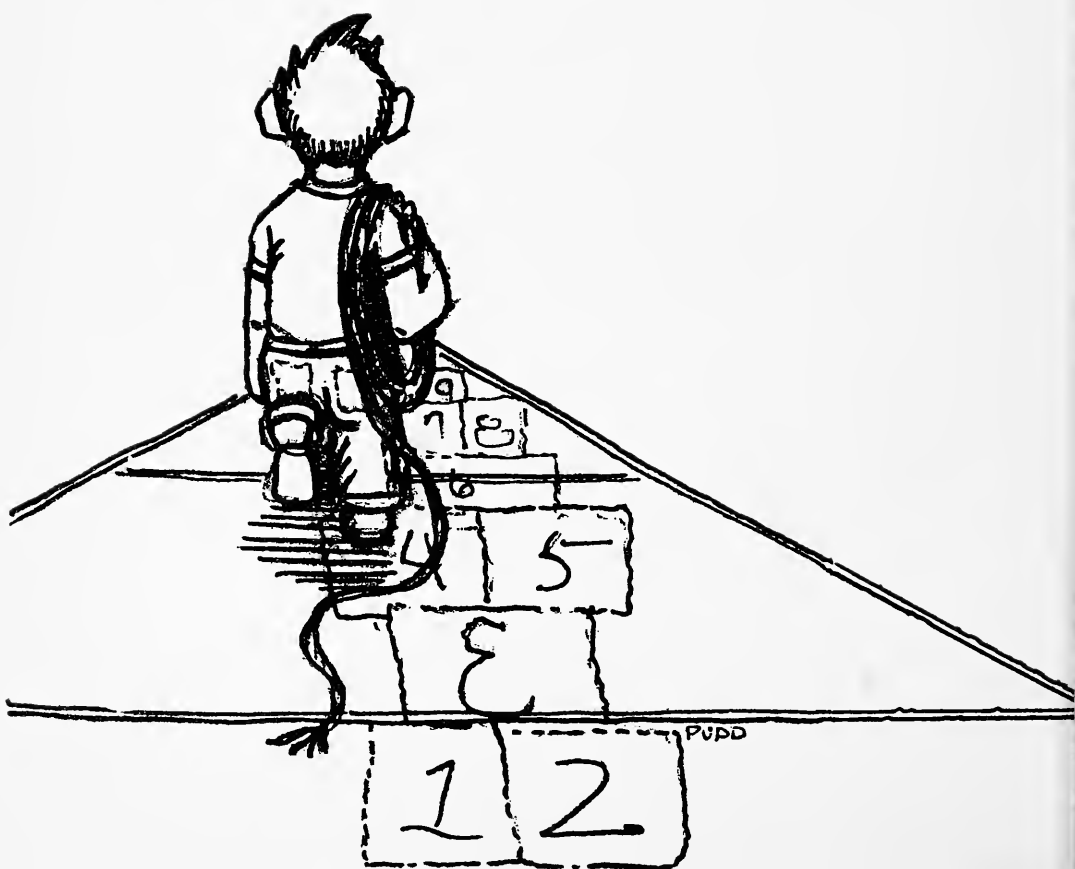
A Poem, "On Contemporary Education," printed in the Winter 1965 Edition of the *Colonnade*, was featured in the Hollins College Poetry Festival this spring. The author, Freda Richards, also won second place in *The Colonnade* Spring Literary Contest, and that poem "#1", is presented in this issue. She is currently poetry editor of *The Colonnade*. A freshman from Tampa, Florida, Freda is studying toward a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a decided slant to writing as a career.

Poetry, however, is not Freda's only creative outlet, for two of her prose impressions have appeared in this year's editions of the magazine. As poetry is her primary creative interest, the conversation naturally led into her work as a poet. When asked how she received the motivation to write a poem, Freda replied, "When I write, it is most always a spontaneous outflow of emotion—I don't deliberately set out to preach." Most of her work is done in free verse, and in defense of this, she said, "I am not able to discipline myself enough to write in meter and rhyme." To her the "specific meaning, the image or impression created is far more important than meter and rhyme." She did agree, however, that structured metrics and rhyme were a valid portion of the work of the mature poet, and indeed an essential stage in the development of the mature poetic expression.

From these considerations, the conversation turned to young modern poets in general. Obscurity of meaning is one obstacle which faces the reader of modern poetry, and Freda made this comment, "I think the reason many young poets (myself in particular) are considered obscure is that they write very subjectively and are more egoistic than the mature poet, who is far more precise in diction and has more experience to lend an air of believability to his work."

Freda commented that she never set aside any particular time to write poetry, and that often many first drafts of her poems had been composed in the margins of notebooks during classes! In talking about the broader purposes for writing poetry, she made this remark about her work, "I don't think you can deliberately convince anyone of anything, but if someone happens by chance to gain from my poetry—that's well and good." "For me, she said, "it's a means of recording permanently my own emotions and experiences. You could say I write for myself, but then everybody does basically."

Donna Weatherly



The Brave Little Boy

Carolyn B. Rice

Bubba was under the large, arching branches of the red rambler rosebush when he heard his mother calling him. He let her call twice before he crawled out into the penetrating heat of the summer sunshine, dazzling after the cool dimness of his favorite hideway.

"Yes, Mama, I'm coming," he called as he started across the lawn to the side porch. I wonder what she wants? She told me to stay strictly away from the parlor, the dining room, the kitchen, and the downstairs bathroom while she was fixing for the meeting of the Literary Club.

"Honey," his mother started as he got within hearing distance, "I need your help. Everyone else is so busy. Run down to Mrs. Dabney for Mother and get the mousse."

"Moose?"

"Yes, Bubba," his mother replied. "She just called and said it's ready."

"But, Mama, won't you think I'm too little?"

"Not if you're careful," she replied sharply.

"But, Mama—" Bubba started, wide-eyed and almost breathless.

"Oh, Pomp," his mother called to the passing Negro servant, "please go in and help Ellen. She says she just can't finish in time unless you help her. I don't think I can stand another thing going wrong—Bubba, run on right now and be careful—and if Ellen picks today to—"her voice trailed off as she passed into the hall reiterating her woes. Bubba recognized the danger signals from his usually placid and patient mother and did not follow her.

"You heard your mama, Bubba, so run on like she say."

"I'm going, Pomp, right now, just as soon as I get something," Bubba exclaimed over his shoulder as he ran to the tool shed. There he found, as he remembered, the long, stout rope coiled on a nail. He hung the coil around his neck and went up the driveway to the unpaved sidewalk and then into the dusty road.

No, no cars were in sight. It was all right to walk in the road where everybody would see him. Then if anybody asked about the rope he would tell them about his mission. Excitement rose up in him to crowd out his fears. Just think, a six-year old boy leading a moose up the middle of this very road in about half an hour. Why, that would cause more excitement

(continued on next page)

than the time the circus went through and a man was riding an elephant. Golly, that elephant had been big, but this moose would be bigger. Daddy was reading him one of his books he had when he was a boy, *The Brave Young Moose Hunters*, and in the picture the moose looked about half as tall as a house. Think of all the people running out to their fences and the sidewalk to stare wide-eyed. In his mind Bubba heard the swelling chorus of voices, "Look at that brave little boy." And he *would* be brave, leading a moose up the street all by himself. Oh Golly!

"Good morning, Bubba."

So deeply wrapped in his rosy dreams of bravery was Bubba that he had to stare before he could return old Colonel Hamilton's greeting. Oh, won't he be surprised and pleased when he sees how brave I am. He's always talking about his brave men in The War, well, just wait untill he sees me all by myself leading a great, big moose.

"Well, Bubba, is your mother busy getting ready for the big event this afternoon?" Mrs. Wallace chuckled as she snipped faded roses from the bushes covering her front fence.

"Yes'm," Bubba replied, "right busy." And just you wait a while, he chortled to himself, and you'll call me that brave little Bubba Hampton and I'll bet you never forget this day.

Everyone greeted Bubba as he walked along kicking up little puffs of dust with his bare feet. And inwardly Bubba told each one, just wait awhile and you'll see a sight you won't forget. If I told you where I was going and what I'm going to do you almost wouldn't believe me; but you'll see. The coil of rope felt heavy on his neck and chest. Funny nobody asked about it; but if they did he'd tell them.

When Bubba knocked at Mrs. Dabney's front door a queasy feeling of apprehension was knotting deep in his chest and rising up in his throat so that he had to clear his voice before he could return the greeting of Lucy, the Negro woman who answered the door.

"Mama sent me for the moose."

"All right, Bubba, Mrs. Dabney got it ready and I'll bring it right out."

Right through the house, Bubba thought worriedly? Won't it knock over the furniture and the vases and the other stuff? Will I have to pull it through the door? Will it lean its head down so I can tie the rope around its neck—or maybe to an antler? Gee, Mrs. Dabney must have really tamed

THE BRAVE LITTLE BOY

it. Maybe I can ride it home. That would be more exciting even than leading it.

Lucy returned with a very large, deep, bread pan covered with a clean, white dish towel. She held it out to Bubba. "Here's the mousse, Bubba. Be careful. It's awful large for a little boy. Why didn't your mama send Pomp?"

"Lucy," Bubba got his words out with difficulty, "that's the moose?"

"Yes, Bubba, almond mousse. It looks like it turned out real good. Now go on home right away and don't stop nowhere because it's hot today. But be careful."

"Yes'm. Thank you," Bubba managed before he turned and started home.

It was a hot, dusty, humiliating walk back home. His shoulders and arms ached intolerably before he made his way into the kitchen and set his burden on the table before his mother and Ellen.

"Well son, good boy. You made it back fine," his mother beamed. She uncovered the big pan and Bubba looked down at the gelatinous contents. Moose, so that's moose.

"Here, chile, I fixed you a lunch you can eat under the rosebushes. And stay out of here where we so busy." Ellen spoke crossly but she patted his shoulder fondly after she gave him a little paper sack and a capped jar of milk.

On his way out the back door Bubba passed Pomp, rubbing a shine on the silver tea service, who asked, "What you doing with that good rope? You put it back right now, you hear, 'fore you lose it."

"All right, Pomp," Bubba said wearily.

He hung the coil of rope on its nail and shut the tool shed door on the reminder of his humiliation and bitter disappointment. Now he quivered thinking, suppose someone had asked me about the rope on my way down to Mrs. Dabney's and I had told them; then everyone would have laughed all the way up the street; and nobody would ever have forgotten it. "Remember that stupid, little Bubba Hampton who thought he was going to lead a great, big, wild moose up the road?"

Under the rosebush Bubba felt too sick to eat his lunch. He turned over the morning's events in his mind. Do all grown people have another word for every word I know? How do they know which thing the words mean? Or does every word mean lots of different things to you when you grow up? How come they don't don't mix grown people up? When do you get grown up

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THE BRAVE LITTLE BOY

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enough to know the magic of not getting mixed up? His bewilderment boiled around in his head.

Gradually Bubba's turmoil ceased. After he ate his lunch he lay back on the cool, bare earth. He closed his eyes and the dream began to take form of a brave, little boy leading a gigantic moose around. And the crowds cheered.



Last Summer of My Life

Gerald F. Ragland, Jr.

It was time to go home. Home to Virginia after four days of looking. For what? That was the supreme irony of the whole pilgrimage; I could not really put my finger on what it was I had been looking for. I had driven hundreds of miles over concrete ribbons—interstate 95, turnpikes, through Rhode Island and Massachusetts—to P-town. For what? The question had been avoided by the last few months of college which had filled my mind with other things. But the hollowness, the feeling of being one man at odds with the rest of the world still plagued me.

Now that I was leaving the cape again, I found that for the first time since that night last August I was able to think about the days of last summer. That summer which was a time of commitment. A summer in which a man could feel necessary. I had achieved that summer all I could sincerely ask of life; I had lived by working as an actor and a part-time automobile mechanic. A life of creativity. Creativity of the spirit on stage and of the hand with automobiles. Paul had agreed with me on that manner of living. In fact Paul and I usually agreed on everything about life. I don't mean to say that we never disagreed on smaller aspects, but in our basic approach to life we were of the same mind. We were then. We two cavaliers had come to Provincetown in early May, leaving the sidewalks, bookstores, art galleries, and cafés of Cambridge behind. Exchanging them for another environment conducive to living on the fringes of society. We were agreed that to emerge ourselves in the main stream of American life was to submit to a baptism which killed the soul. We had both been a part of the plan, so we knew. Both Paul and I had been in college. Paul had spent a year at New York University, and I had two years behind me at my small Virginia school, but college was not our way.

A summer of the good life. We shared a small cottage on the ocean side of the cape. Paul worked in a beer joint by day and at living by night. Somehow he also found time to write. In fact he wrote to some New York publisher several times that summer about a book they were interested in, but nothing came of it. The publisher sent Paul a nice rejection notice. When I got home the night after he received their letter, he was stone drunk. I had a date with me, so she helped by making coffee. A few minutes later I noticed that Paul was rigid in his chair with eyes fixed in some other dimen-

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sion. He looked completely sober. He then turned to me as if he didn't know me and asked.

"Who's the young lady?"

Before I could answer, he said to her,

"You, girl, are an imposter. Where do you go to school?"

She, sensing the intensity of his tone, answered hesitantly,

"I go to college in. . . ."

"IMPOSTER!" Paul shouted. "Imposter—imposter—imposter. What are you doing living like this? Are you some summertime Homer? If you can't live life all year, you have no right to do so in summer."

I took her home while trying to explain why Paul had behaved as he had. When I got back he was standing on the beach with the water coming almost to his feet and slowly returning to the Atlantic. Returning to the Atlantic.

It was time to get started toward Virginia. I had said I was only going to stay a few days. They wanted me to be home by Christmas, and I did have work to do before returning to school in January. I went through the mechanics of driving and in a few moments my car was leaving Provincetown. P-town in December was cold and small. The town looked closer together than in summer, as if it had made itself smaller in order to keep warmer. The sand dunes looked larger by the full moonlight. My car moved quietly between them. The light beams were narrowed by the valley walls of sand. I was thinking. . .

Paul stood on the beach that night and tore up their letter. The small white pieces of paper danced at his feet over the sand. He turned and said,

"You and me, we lead the good life, eh?"

Everything was all right again. We drank that night as if the god of drink was to be crucified the very next day.

Life was good and August came. The theatre closed for the summer leaving me with only a part-time mechanics job. I must have had too much time in which to think because I began quizzing myself as to what was going to happen next. It was only a whim of thought, but it occurred to me that I could go back to Virginia and finish school. I could have a degree in two years and then look for the next step life had to offer. As I said it was only a thought. I was in the cottage fixing supper when Paul came in that night. Somehow after a few minutes had gone by I said something about college and me. I don't remember exactly what I said, but I have never before gotten

LAST SUMMER OF MY LIFE

such a violent reaction from Paul over anything. I felt impelled to defend my idea even though I had not been serious about it. I said something about education being one way to insulate yourself from society. I told him that the only way to keep from being swallowed up was to be economically at the bottom end or educationally at the top end of society. In my defense I had jumped at college as a means of beating the American middle class. Paul shouted,

"College is the strong arm of the middle class."

I answered that the degree was a ticket which could put you in places where you didn't have to worry about the values of society. The whole while we were talking I was dumbfounded by the fact that we were screaming at each other in such a manner. We were two sides of the same coin—brothers in life. Suddenly Paul ended a sentence by stomping out of the cottage toward the beach. After he had gone out I defensively said to myself that I was going back to Virginia. But I soon found myself walking toward the beach looking for Paul. I ran down the steep bank leading to the sand, fell, and rolled over at the bottom. The fall added urgency to my pursuit, so I began to run lightly down that broad miles-long stretch of sand, flanked on one side by ocean and on the other by high banks. Minutes went by. . . .

When I caught Paul the sun had gone down so the banks and the ocean became shades darker, leaving the long white beach with two figures standing facing each other about ten feet apart. Nothing was said. Strangely, I happened to notice that we were standing on untrodden sand which was quite unusual for the cape in summer. The sand was generally agitated by thousands of human feet, but we had gone down so far that we had reached a place the masses had not trodden. As we stood there I felt that we were squared off like fighters so I made reconciliatory sounds, but I found that somehow I had made a wound too deep to be easily repaired. I don't know what I said that started him, but suddenly Paul, my brother by virtue of choice, charged at me with his whole body and being and the two of us were sprawled on the sand. Insanely, I too began to fight, not methodically as a trained boxer would, but savagely like an enraged child. The two of us hurled our bodies together only to fall, get up, and repeat the process. Then we stopped for a breathing space and faced each other covered with sand and red from rolling in the sand. Breathing like dying animals. . . .

Five minutes went by before we moved. Paul spoke,

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"You're just like all the rest."

Then he charged again the manner of a man about to cut off a leg which had to be crushed in order to save the rest of his body. After that it was only a series of thumps, falls, flying sand, and blood. I felt my face wet, and it was not only blood, but also tears. Water and blood mixed and fell to the sand. Paul was crying like a man about to die. Finally he hit me so hard in the stomach that I fell down unable to breathe for a moment. As I lay there gasping, Paul ran off toward the cottage.

I must have lain there for an hour crying and bleeding. The sand was no longer smooth but was torn up all about me. The moon was up over the water and a finger of light pointed toward the lone figure lying on the beach. When I got back to the cottage Paul was gone. . . .

"Camden 55 Miles", the sign said as my car hurled by it. The sky was becoming lighter over the New Jersey flatlands. I was trying to get home in time for Christmas Eve. What was funny was that I was going south and I wasn't sure why I had gone north. In the half-light of early morning the New Jersey Turnpike was just a long white stretch between masses of darkness. Like the beach. . . .



THUNDER

Thunder arrives
on galloping legs,
halting an instant
to catch its wind.

It stamps, trumpets,
and rumbles on.

CAROL TINGLEY

The Schoolhouse

Virginia Petty

The afternoon sun glared at the white sandy path ahead of me. Rows of dusty corn, withered by the heat, ranged along both sides of the path. Behind them, about an acre back, were spicy-smelling woods. My bare feet, covered with a white mist of fine dust, encountered an occasional sandspur, making my sweaty misery more unbearable.

I had escaped from the ennui of a quiet house, tired of cool shuttered rooms and sounds of adult voices on the porch, punctuating the leaden sultriness. Being of an age when an active body repelled an afternoon nap, I was avidly searching for some new mischief to amuse me.

There was rough grass now, and a clearing in the circle of trees. Centered in this spot stood a dilapidated shingle schoolhouse. I had heard many stories about it—how aunts and uncles, and grandparents had been taught there, and about the plaster-faced tutor who nervously came each fall. It had been deserted for years, and off pieces of junk were stored inside.

Glancing guiltily back at the house, I reached for the doornob, a white china orb with stains of rust and a chip in the center. As the door swung shakily open, a fragrant heat poured out—a mixture of dried tobacco leaves and rotting papers. On the wall facing me hung an octagonal clock with COCA-COLA stamped across its face. Two keyholes in the center stared at me, like empty sockets.

Wallpaper hung in faded strips. Dark pencil marks and greasy spots adorned the ugly pattern of flagrant strips. Around the floor, rats had dined on the paper, and an uneven design rippled its surface from seeping rain.

I walked across the soft wooden floor which quivered beneath each footstep. Under the clock sat a squat leather trunk. Lifting its broken lid, I saw the faded silk lining and a clutter of boxes and clothing. An old Valentine's card, bought for fifty cents, lay on the top. An obese, naked cherub coyly looked at me from its cover, still bright against moss-green leaves.

Peering beneath the card, I saw a white organdy dress, yellow in streaks like parchment. Shaking out its folds, I held it up against the yellow light glancing in through windows in the room. Lace flowers were embroidered on the skirt, like icy petals suspended in a mist. A faint fragrance of lavender touched the heavy air, an intimate essence of its owner.

Carefully placing the dress back, I burrowed beneath a stretched, pink corset, carefully mended, and faded black wool trousers, still wrinkled behind the knees. A spotty velvet box came into view. Inside, scattered, odd bits of

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jewelry formed a crazy mosaic of colors: bright beads, a silver locket, a broken brooch of amethyst—colored stones. A slender needle lay entangled in a web of coarse thread, and three yellow pearls clumped against a clumsily knotted clasp.

I, the intruder, glanced beside the trunk. Like sentinels, two .22-gauge rifles stood against the stained wallpaper. In front of them rested a battered pair of shoes, with tiny veins of mud caked around the soles. The crackly leather had been meticulously polished by now dead hands. Silent eyes, gently chiding in their stare, looked at me: the lock on the trunk, tarnished brass knobs on a gloomy highboy hulking in a corner. I hastily closed the lid of the trunk and stood up, feeling a wave of nausea surge in my throat. A face peered at me in the ripply surface of a mirror on the highboy, drowning in the waves of tarnished reflection.

Looking through a window I saw the brilliant sun, harsh and crazy light. Tiny bubbles in the glass swam in uneven waves. Rushing to the door, I stepped outside, and closed it softly behind me. Quiet voices whispered in the pines above me: an inarticulate sigh. I turned toward the house, still smelling the warm, pungent odor of the schoolroom. Dust etched a delicate tracery in my sweaty palms, and I felt suddenly old, with a cloying sweetness of lavender in my mouth.

Report

June Lancaster

Since individuals of our race rejuvenate at will and thus have immortality and since new individuals are created by order of the Supreme Ruler, our race has no population control difficulties. But creatures which reproduce sexually and have short individual life spans, finding personal and racial immortality only in their offspring, reproduce indiscriminately and eventually face problems in population control. In the interest of scientific curiosity, following experiment was undertaken.

Population Control Experimental Project I: Sexually Reproducing Primitively Intelligent Species.

Object: This experiment will discover the results of an overpopulation problem in a sexually reproducing species intelligent enough to recognize the problem.

Bigotry

[With Apologies to Mr. Sandburg]

Dig pits for the reeking dead at Belsen and Buchenwald
Inspire hate and let me work—

I am bigotry; I destroy all.

And raise crosses of flame in Mississippi
And jeer at sweet freedom's star in Selma.

Make them bow scrape and let me work.

Ten years, ten thousand years, and a child asks his God:

Who are they?

Why is hate between us?

I am bigotry.

Let me work.

CAROLE DAWSON

Crazy Howard's Fella

Marcia Catoe

The green hut squatted on the damp earth as the cold, grey rain drove against it. A thick, black smoke billowed from the single dwarfed chimney and diffused into the grey sky. After a while the rain stopped but greyness remained over the tiny harbor town and the green tarpapered shack.

Presently Howard came down the muddy, deeply rutted road. A burlap sack was slung over his shoulder; the cumbersome contents of the sack bounced against his buttocks as he walked. The heavy bumping of his sack gave his walk an awkward, jerky look. I could see him from the tool shed where I had been looking for a chisel. He had not shaved, and his black beard and half-toothless grin made him appear ruthless. One could scarcely see his dark eyes under his black shaggy brows and unkempt hair. A pack of mongrel dogs slunk along at his heels as he approached his shack.

I stood very still and watched as Howard threw his burlap sack to the ground. He went into the house, his movements gypsy-like now that he had rid himself of his burden. While he was gone the dogs sniffed about the sack. One of them, a mottled black and white beast of a dog of which I had always been half afraid, lifted his leg and urinated on the sack and its contents. Howard, catching sight of this action as he came from the shack swore and waved a chipped agate pan at the dog. Fella (that was this dog's name) jumped away from Howard's fury and finished his business with a clump of bush and weeds. The other dogs sat at a short distance to watch Howard.

He picked up the burlap sack and turned it upside down. Several hundred clams, still moist and marshy spewed from the sack. Howard sat down on a rough stool with his pan beside him and drew from his belt an old, rusty knife. He reached for a clam, held it against his breast and forced the knife into its shell. The contents he scooped out and threw into the pan. The shell he cast into the bushes. This routine was repeated over and over, and once a shell flew through the bushes and landed in our yard. All this time Howard laughed and talked with his dogs. He had an unrestrained, wild laugh that made me shiver. But still I watched. I could hear his voice plainly through the broken window of the tool shed, but I could not understand his words. I was never able to understand anything our strange neighbor said.

The pan of clams had been growing steadily fuller. Fella, his nose and flanks quivering with the delight of smelling the fresh seafood, seemed to be able to curb his appetite no longer. He halfrose from his position and crept

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CRAZY HOWARD'S FELLA

(continued from page 21)

with his belly almost touching the ground nearer the pan. He reached it, sniffed once, and grabbed a whole clam in his wolfish mouth. Retreating silently, he devoured the clam. This action went unobserved for a while. Howard opened and put in two clams while Fella stole one. Then Howard turned to look at his pan and saw it only half filled. I was surprised that with his limited mentality he saw the difference, but thought perhaps he had seen Fella finishing up a part of his stolen treat.

Springing from his stool, his face grey with a beastly rage, Howard flung a series of oaths at the dog. Fella started to run, but Howard caught him by a hind leg. The dog in his great fright bit his master's hand. Again Howard swore as he put his injured hand to his mouth. He still had the dog by its hind leg. Now he grasped it by the neck and pressed his hard fingers around the dog's throat. I watched in a dead horror, unable to move or to cry out. Finally the dog stopped struggling and Howard flung it into the pile of clam shells. The dog was very still in his grotesque position among the shells. The other dogs had not moved and continued to watch with a remote interest. Howard went back to opening clams.

Suddenly the walls of the tool shed seemed to be contracting. I ran from the shed and into the house. Grandmother sat in her rocking chair and looked startled as I bolted past her, up the stairs and into my room. I looked out the window down at Howard's shack. The dog was still on the pile of shells, but he had rolled over and was trying to get up. I pulled down the shade and flung myself on the bed.

REPORT

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with the outside world, the entire experiment was destroyed on 8:13:4193:66. (See attached report for details.)

Conclusion: Our basic problem with the species was of a genetic-mental rather than physical nature. They had ideal physical surroundings and were near the desired overpopulation. But our geneticists left them with too much imagination, which sent them exploring beyond their limit, and too much emotion, which made their acceptance of us and our world as reality impossible. (See attached plan for Population Control Experimental Project II in which these faults will be corrected.)

Unmarked and Forgotten

Bury me as Mozart in the drenching rain.
Forget where I am buried, no stone for me,
Just nature's warm protecting earth.
Let the weeds overgrow my place and
Dig their roots in my decayed heart.
I rotted in the earth in pain ; now let me
Rot in the earth with peace and tranquility.
My heart was decayed on earth, but you saw it.
All I want now is to be hidden my mother.
Walk on my grave but do not remember who
Yes, who is buried there.
No ceremony because you may wish to rejoice,
And that is not fitting for the dead.
Just dig a hole as for a bulb which may
Bring to the world a new spring life, because
I too as that bulb will have new life in the ground,
The ground from whence I came and return.
Don't plant violets on my mound !
The weeds from my heart will surround them ;
And will choke their life as me they will die.
Forget that I existed because again on this earth
You will not find me nor any trace.
I will be buried as Mozart in the drenching rain
In an unmarked grave that can't be found.

SANDRA SCHAAF

Was the Negro Ready for Emancipation?

Nancy Schrum

In order to come to any conclusion as to the Negro's "readiness" for emancipation, one must necessarily consider each step the Negro took in adjusting himself to society from 1863, when northern whites literally commanded him to become free, to the period following 1865, when the Negro began demanding for himself the rights which he, as a free citizen felt were his to enjoy.

The ancient philosophy that man has an inherent thirst for knowledge could well apply to the American Negro, even before his emancipation and most notably afterward. While still slaves, many house servants and field hands who performed duties that required elementary education were taught by their masters to read, write, and understand basic arithmetic, even though such teaching was against the law.¹ Some Negroes were known to own Bibles, and with their deep religious fervor, one cannot dismiss the thought that they would have eagerly accepted any tutoring available in order to read about their God. The Negroes who did learn to read and write were noticeably those who were in close contact with the educated whites and were exposed to the desirability of such training. The majority of the Negroes, of course, remained illiterate. They had neither reason nor desire to learn because they had never associated themselves with a social role requiring education.

Once the Negro was free, however, and the South was invaded with northerners interested in helping the Negro adjust to his new role, the Negro readily accepted any proffered instruction. And this response to education was the first step in the Negro's ascension to the status of a responsible citizen. A prime example of early Negro response to education can be found in the experiment which took place in the Sea Islands of Georgia. At Coffin's Point of St. Helena Island, William Gannett and Harriet Ware, northerners who had come to help educate the Negroes, reported that by the second week in May of 1862, they had enrolled 138 pupils, and 58 of them were adult field hands. Even though some of the children had to walk as much as four miles to the school, attendance was regular. Superintendents of the farming reported that the strangest threat they had to make the Negro worker was to threaten to take away his primer.² Other reports of school openings throughout the South testify to the fact that the Negro was beginning to identify himself with the role of an educated citizen.

Those opposed to educating the freedmen would complain that "Yankee schoolmarms" were invading the South with "radical ideas" and "did much

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to create and foster in the freedmen aversion to taking up their old familiar labor with the shovel and hoe." There were complaints that the Negro "preferred to speculate about (his) abstract rights rather than to avail themselves of the privileges before them."³ The Negro's attitudes toward labor will be discussed later, but a comment is necessary to point out that southern slaveholders should have understood better than anyone else in the country at that time the grave significance of the individual's "abstract rights" to himself. The southern slaveholders had just ceased fighting a war for such rights, and the Negro was now learning that he, too, had rights worthy of consideration and debate.

Through his desire for education and the achievement of his goal, as R. M. Manley, the Superintendent of Colored Schools in Virginia under the Freedmen's Bureau, pointed out in 1869, the Negro gained a feeling of self-respect⁴—a feeling which he had never before had any reason to feel, but was necessary if he were to assume an active role in fighting for equality.

Of course, the Negro could never have adjusted as well as he did to his new condition had it not been for governmental protection and the aid of the Freedmen's Bureau and private individuals who sought to help him during the crucial period. But much must be said in the Negro's favor for his readiness to learn new ideas and adjust to his new life. He was learning how to think and could begin making his own decisions for the first time since his arrival in America.

The importance of educating the freedmen, and also the southern whites, can also be seen in the problems concerning the new labor changes. There was no way the Negro or the white slaveholders could ever have been "ready" for the impact of free labor, so long as they continued to work under slavery. Neither blacks nor whites understood exactly what the term implied. Negroes equated free labor with freedom from work, freedom from keeping contracts (which they inevitably associated with their former condition of servitude), and in general, freedom to do what one pleased with one's own time. White planters, on the other hand, were of the opinion that unless a Negro were forced to work, he would remain lazy, indifferent, and would be of no value as a labor force.

No doubt freedmen did leave farms and refused to work when they did not receive the salary they were promised. Generally, the Negro preferred to be paid in terms of shares of the crop; but when the crop failed, he had nothing with which to support his family. And if he were advanced crops or money by his landlord, and the harvest did not yield what the farmer

WAS THE NEGRO READY FOR EMANCIPATION?

had anticipated, the freedmen would be in debt to the farmer for the remainder of the winter, trying to work off the balance of the amount for which he had been advanced in the spring. All cannot be blamed on the farmer however, for he was doubtless in destitution himself following the war. And the crop failure of 1866, which can be attributed to bad weather and insects, only intensified the agricultural crisis.⁵ Yet regardless of where the blame lay, the Negro felt it advisable to leave the farm and seek more lucrative means of labor, perhaps in the city. As for those Negroes who did remain on the farms, they were considered by the whites as having become lazy, as they were producing less cotton than they had under slavery. Doubtless the freedmen *were* producing less cotton, and certainly some of the Negroes were lazy and indifferent. Yet one must also consider that as free men, Negroes were cultivating new interests and accepting more varied responsibility. They devoted more time to education, to their families, and to leisure than they had formely been able to do.⁶ No longer were Negroes merely a labor force; they were fast becoming as diversified in nature as the whites.

The evaluation of self-respect in the Negro certainly influenced his value as a labor force. At Coffin's Point on St. Helena Island in the Sea Islands of Georgia, Edward Philbrick, a cotton superintendent, was successful in showing that the Negroes were much more satisfied when "gang systems" were abolished and each family accepted the responsibility of maintaining its own livelihood at their own rate of production and producing what they wanted in addition to as much cotton as they wanted.⁷ In working for himself and his family, rather than for a white landholder, the Negro could gain the personal satisfaction of knowing that he was accepting responsibility. He was no longer merely another cog in the wheel, but to his dependents, he was the very axle. Some Negroes who had nothing with which they could associate a desire to work remained, of course, lazy and indifferent.

The freedmen also felt the need for greater security in their jobs, and some of them found this security in organizing "labor unions" to demand higher wages.⁸ However haphazard was the formation of these "unions", they served as further examples of the Negro's growing self-respect and interest in protecting his rights.

In conjunction with establishing himself as a free laborer, Negroes began investing their money in real estate. W. H. Ruffner, State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Virginia in 1871, pointed out that the total sum of money deposited by the freedmen in the Freedmen's Savings Banks

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throughout the country up to July 1, 1870, was \$16,960,336, and that of all the deposits withdrawn in Virginia in 1871, seventy percent had been invested in real estate.⁹ Further evidence of the Negro's desire to buy land and establish homes can be seen in the concentrated action of Richmond Negroes in 1868 when they organized the Virginia Home Builders Fund and Loan Association, which was chartered by the State Legislature to purchase lands to be sold in small sections to the Negroes.¹⁰

Ownership of land was to the Negro another hallmark of his new status as a free man. Often, however, he was prevented from acquiring new land because of white prejudices. It is natural to assume that white planters would be extremely indignant at the sale of "their" land to former slaves. Both social pressures and poor economic conditions in the South prevented the Negro from acquiring as much land as he might have wanted.

The Negro as a free man, and in many cases as a property owner, now sought to attain some influence in the making of laws which would guide his new life. Encouraged by the Freedmen's Bureau and other interested persons, the freedmen took an active part in voting. However, they were often too easily influenced by Yankee carpetbaggers and politicians who quickly gained the Negroes' confidence, or perhaps by southern whites whose political influence was strong enough to pose a potential threat to a Negro's livelihood.

The Freedmen had to learn through personal experience that politics can be somewhat tricky and even ruthless at times; just as any political novice must discover for himself. Indeed, the Negro in some cases perhaps showed more interest in voting than the whites.

Negroes in Virginia in 1867 proved their desire to voice their opinions before the government. Voters registered to decide whether the state would hold a constitutional convention and choose delegates. The registration numbered approximately 226,000. About 120,000 of them were whites and almost 106,000 were Negroes. In the election, which took place on December 3, 1867, Negroes cast over 17,000 more ballots than did the whites. Of the 105 delegates to the constitutional convention, the radicals elected 72, twenty-five of whom were Negroes.¹¹ The Negroes gained full political and economic rights. Of course those freedmen participating in direct law-making were few and the influence of northern radicals over them was great, but the Negro did show desire to learn how to become a responsible citizen and to participate in his country's lawmaking.

The Negro assimilated himself and showed his ability to equal the white

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man in the fields of education, labor, and politics, for in these areas he was protected by legislation. However, no law can force a man to accept another man's beliefs, manners, or race. The wide gap which existed between the free whites and slaves before the latter's freedom could not automatically vanish upon the decree that southern blacks were suddenly free. The Negro had to learn how to be a free man in a free society, just as he had to learn how to read, to understand the economics of free labor, and to appreciate the value of suffrage and the complexity of politics.

That the initial reaction of the slaves toward freedom was to loot mansions and ravage the countryside is not surprising. Soldiers did likewise, and they were not experiencing the "stringent crisis" of identity which faced the Negro.¹² Doubtless the fact that the country was convulsed in war intensified the Negro's dilemma, but had he been freed even during time of peace, the violent social upheaval would still have been inevitable and would have occurred whenever the Negro was freed.

Demonstrations and actions, such as the attempt by Richmond freedmen to ride streetcars in April of 1866, showed the Negro testing the validity of his newly acquired freedom,¹³ a normal reaction and further evidence of the Negro's interest in identifying himself in his new role.

As to specific changes regarding the rise in crime after emancipation, here again one must consider that war begets crime and that the change in status of the Negro increased tenfold his susceptibility to the effects war has on the potential criminality of man.

It must also be pointed out that the tremendous antagonism the whites felt toward the Negroes influenced the colored criminal records. Negroes might be blamed for crimes without any formal investigation as to whether or not the crime was actually committed. Moreover, white crimes against Negroes were not classified as crimes, while self-defense was a crime for a Negro. When a Negro was convicted, he might be given the maximum penalty, or he might be jailed for political reasons.¹⁴

In summary, the Negro experienced such difficulties after emancipation because under slavery, he had lacked training for any independence. To be precise, the Negro was not "ready" for freedom in that he was not fully aware of all that is required of a citizen in a democratic society. The Negro was, however, ready to *learn* how to be free.

Slavery had failed to provide directions in which the Negro could grow. The habits which had been instilled in his character and which were desirable in a servant were not of the same nature as those desirable in a free

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1

I see a sad brown world,
Fraught with green snakes,
Trembling in a
High, cold wind.
Weeds on a barren sand
Hide rodents, lizards, desert-rats.
A half-way sun,
Corona-crowned,
Shines stolidly on the silent
Rat.
Tracks cross the land,
Paralleling into infinity,
Twin rodes to hell;
Naked steel,
Rotting ties.
And I walk out,
And I am cold,
In the cold, high wind,
And I am naked as steel too.
In me is a deep, white road to hell.
Waxlight dimly flickering,
Snuffed out by a foul breath.
Grass trembles,
The snake glides by,
Not seeing my ready
Ax.

FREDA RICHARDS

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citizen of America. Yet the white man set the Negro free, and it was his responsibility to lead the way for the Negro's education in social, economic, and political matters. If the Negro failed, it was due in large part to the disinterestedness of those who were educated enough to show him the way, not to mention the hostility of those who should have helped him.

There was no particular period in our history when the Negro would have been entirely ready for emancipation, as the same prejudice against the Negro has existed in America ever since his arrival in 1619. Perhaps a more pertinent question to postulate is whether the white man was ready to teach the Negro to be free. This is the crucial question, for the Negro demonstrated that he would respond readily to any situation which offered him the opportunity to adjust to his new role, and he was restrained only by the prejudices of a race that jealously protected its "superiority."

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*. (New York, 1964), p. 86.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 87-8.
- 3 John McConnell, *Negroes and Their Treatment In Virginia From 1865 to 1867* (Pulaski, Va., 1910), p. 24.
- 4 Alrutheus Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia*. (Lancaster, Pa., 1926), p. 143.
- 5 "Agriculture," *The American Annual Cyclopedia*. 1866 ed., p.6.
- 6 Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
- 7 *Ibid.*, pp. 82-3.
- 8 Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- 11 McConnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-8.
- 12 Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
- 13 McConnell, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
- 14 Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

WAS THE NEGRO READY FOR EMANCIPATION?

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